

THE
P R O G R E S S
O F
F A S H I O N :
EXHIBITING A
V I E W
O F I T S
I N F L U E N C E
I N A L L T H E
D E P A R T M E N T S O F L I F E .

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EXHIBIT A

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1911

EDWIN G. L.

IN ALL THE

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TO

E L I Z A.

THIS being a Book on FASHIONS
it would not consist with its Title
to want a Dedication.

To please the World, then, I desire
that this may be considered and taken
in full for all Epistles Dedicatory and
Advertisements whatsoever ; and I in-
scribe the Offering to your Name, my
ELIZA, because there is not another
in the World that I love so well.

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THE
P R O G R E S S
O F
F A S H I O N.

THE general influence of Fashion on the manners, habits, and tempers of mankind, may render it not an unentertaining employment, to enquire how the World differs so widely, on a subject, the center of general attention, and the source of passions so various and opposite. When we hear one exclaim that the Fashion and the World are synonymous terms, and that to be out of existence and out of the *Ton* are objects of equal consequence; when we see another shrink from Fashion as from a monster, widely gaping to de-

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our and to destroy ; we are naturally led to ask from what disorder in the optics or the intellects, so striking a contradiction can proceed. The first step of our enquiry shews us, that it arises from a misconception of terms. The word FASHION has, like many others, been corrupted from its meaning, and erroneously taken to signify, strictly, a certain mode of dress or conduct, in the *little* ceremonies of life, which has been adopted by caprice, and nurtured by vanity ; a certain exclusive colour or cut of the face or the garment, to which the World should implicitly conform, regardless of the dictates of nature, and the calls of convenience. In this light, Fashion has justly been held to be the empire of fools ; and men of reason, finding that common sense and common appearance bore so little affinity, were willing to renounce the kindred of the one for the sake of the other.

WE have not sufficiently considered this matter ; and the gravest-faced of us all, while they were censuring Fashions, have forgotten

forgotten that there was a fashion in their
 very censure, which exacted as strict a com-
 pliance from its proselytes as the apron of a
 DEVONSHIRE or the forehead of a CATLET.
 From the mitred prelate of fourscore
 down to the giggling girl of fourteen, look
 at the conduct of mankind through all the
 regular gradation from second childish-
 ness to first, and by all the progressive
 steps from wisdom to folly, and from wit
 to dulness, and you will find Fashion, in
 different shapes, exercising an unbounded
 sway. Search the records of history, rum-
 mage the mouldering annals of neglected
 antiquities, and every revolving year will
 bring you the account of a change, a
 fashion in thought, in actions, in man-
 ners, as well as in dress and in dancing.
 Religion, Law, Phyfic, Philosophy, Mora-
 lity, Politics, Taste—every moral attribute
 of man has turned in the circle of fashiona-
 ble system. Aristotle and Locke, Arius
 and Athanasius, Galen and Cullen, Jef-
 fries and Holt, Filmer and Sydney, have
 mutually had their hour of rule, as well

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as Pompadour and Sestini. The mind of man has been cramped and limited by creeds and confessions, by dogmata and axioms, by aphorisms and maxims. He has been obliged to yield to the direction of Fashion, not only in his actions but in his thoughts, as much as in the make or colour of his coat or stockings; and even the Eternal Father of Mercy has been made to fluctuate with all the variable inconstancy of female weakness.

WHILE Polytheism was the easy vehicle in which every Pagan Worshipper could rest and pay his homage, unmolested and unmolested, and there were almost as many Godheads as there could have been Creeds, still a fashion prevailed to direct the mode of worship. We find that the Divine Author of our religion was reviled and persecuted, and his Apostles and followers branded with infamy, and consigned to punishment, because they introduced an innovation upon established forms. Pliny, whose gentle spirit revolted at the fashionable persecution; who
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could not reconcile it with the dictates of a just conscience to exterminate a race of men that preached, and practised, the most amiable doctrines of Christian morality; and with a trembling hand suspended the terrible judgment of the law over obstinate superstition, until the irrevocable mandate of his sovereign enforced the irksome necessity of its infliction;—Pliny was forced to yield to the fashion, which was sanctified by power, though not by reason, and to lead the fluctuating and dubious to the altars of his Gods, and the images of his Emperor, where the incense and the libation were to prove their faith.

BUT the power of divine revelation, and the internal evidence of the Christian religion, soon effected their purpose, and the example of Constantine set the Roman World the fashion in Christianity. Newly exalted by the hand of frail mortality from dishonour to glory, and from weakness to power; the disciples of Him whose kingdom was not of this world, followed

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followed the example of their oppressors, and assumed at once their power and their habits. The spirit of persecution, which, when exercised against the Christians, raised so many Saints and Martyrs to the indubitable verity of their faith, wielded, in its turn, the sword and the torch in the cause of Infinite Goodness, and levelled paganism prostrate with the dust. Arius and Athanasius clothed their principles in the garbs that suited their respective tenets, and supported their different fashions with more zeal, though less charity, than the Parliament of Richard the Second shewed, when that sapient body of Senators enforced by a penalty the wearing of a short-picked shoe. The ever-wandering mind of man shifted its tenets with the season, and the Councils of Tyre and Sardica, of Nice and Rimini, bear testimony to the erring instability of human weakness. Orthodoxy at last arose triumphant amid the ruin of dejected rivals, and carried the sceptre of a fashionable creed in one hand, while with the other she shook the firebrand of persecution. He, who with the re-
signation

signation of a lamb bore the taunts and scoffs of an impious world, when Mount Calvary was to witness his sufferings for our salvation, had to look down from the Throne of his Father, and see the followers of his doctrine deny that indulgence to modes of faith, for which all the passions, the weakness, and the feelings of man so strongly pleaded. He had to look with pity upon a world, in which, after all the phenomena of nature had testified his power and his sufferings, religious discord displaced Christian love, and it was so soon forgotten, that the Jew and the Samaritan had met together, when God was the Common Father of them all.

AMBITION, that leading principle of human actions, soon wrought upon a Fashion which was too general to distinguish the individuals of its followers; and the Pontiff of Rome claimed a decided power over the minds of men, as the regular descendant of an humble fisherman of Galilee. Fashion, with her usual inconstancy, shifted in favour of a claim,
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the more entitled by its weakness to the all-powerful sanction of opinion, and the concordant world paid the offering of its reverence to the fashionable supremacy of the Roman Bishop.

THIS was the most durable and extensive rage that had long possessed the world. The soothing doctrines preached by the Vicar of Christ (for so the usurper of the Imperial throne affected to style himself) gained the passions of the weak, and shook the reason of the strong. The pecuniary remission of sins, which opened the gates of heaven to believing sinners, and which was wisely calculated upon the twofold consideration of the offender's quality and the quantity of the offence, kept a road well-thronged on which men could travel with so much facility to eternal happiness. That way to heaven, so dark and intricate, so puzzled in mazes and perplexed in error, if permitted to the indiscriminate examination of every common capacity, was wisely shut up from the eye of the curious; and the guide-posts to salvation were

were marked, not by the indelible hand of divine revelation, but by the arbitrary finger of human reason, corrupted by prejudice, and biaſſed by interest. At length the love of novelty and change conspired with discontent and heresy to restore the European world to the original simplicity of Gospel Truth. The dissatisfaction of an insulted and injured disciple detached Luther from a system, which his fathers had followed, and himself had approved. Every part of the Romish doctrine presented an error, and every act of its practice an impiety, to one who had a capacity to discover, and a will to expose its deformities.

A New mode of thinking took place. A system, unamiable in its cause, though glorious in its ends, presented to the agitated world a continued scene of bloody persecution, and the demons of civil and religious discord erected their Theatres in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and England, where the best friend to Christian Unity, the hangman, exercised his odious

office to effect the dissolution of a sect, whose freedom of enquiry has generated all the blessings, which liberty and philosophy have bestowed upon us.

IN Polemics, Fashion, differently from every other case, gathers strength by persecution. The savage cruelty of Charles and Philip, which depopulated the Netherlands; the unrelenting bigotry of Mary, which pursued the same conduct in England; and the fanatic enthusiasm which dictated the massacre of Bartholomew, all conspired to confirm the oppressed and persecuted Protestants in the doctrines, for whose support martyrdom was the highest earthly glory. They arose amidst the flames that were kindled around them, and, yet wounded from the stake, prepared to inflict on their enemies the most ample retaliation. The roasting of Hufs at Constance, which had been, and is still complained of as an unpardonable outrage, was to be justified by the burning of Servetus at Geneva; and the Protestant shewed the Papist, that he could

could follow an example which he reprobated. In this country, particularly, the rage of religious persecution assumed the more dreadful, because more cool and steady, shape of law; and the writ *de heretico comburendo* remained till a modern period of our history, to testify that in the change of opinions, as in the quarrels of brethren, the acrimony was increased by the kindred. The zeal for reformation hurried even moderate men into the most unwarrantable excesses. When the beautiful, but unfortunate, Queen of Scots was doomed to death in a country of whose laws she was no subject, and by a sovereign whose protection she came to implore, she experienced how far the influence of fashionable opinion will silence the cries of nature, and stifle the struggles of humanity. The passions of the Zealot will, in most cases overcome the feelings of the Man, and it was therefore less wonderful that the Bishop of Peterborough should forget the charity of his function, and openly exult, in the hearing of his victim, that he rejoiced in

seeing her sacrificed to the interests of his religion.

WHEN the misfortunes of Charles had thrown the state into disorder, the political empirics thought the Church too might derive advantage from their labours; and the discipline of rank and order, in the hierarchy, which had hitherto been thought essential to the sacred character, now yielded to the popular form. The Independents having completely conquered protestantism as well as popery, thought that they might allow themselves a power, the exercise of which they had asaigned in their antagonists. As the Papists had withheld the cup from the laity, so the new reformers restrained all ranks from the use of the prayer-book. Political abuses begot reformation in religion, and religion, in its turn, caused a revolution in government. The rebellious hand that tore the Crown from Charles, was impious enough to bestow it on Christ; and the God of all the earth was prophanelly elected Sovereign of a spot of it.

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This was fanaticism. The Fashion which followed from this change, was more permanent. The Independents, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and other Dissenters, affected the cant, and whine, and dissimulation, of hypocrisy, that were likely to catch the vulgar, and threw aside calm reasoning as an unnecessary instrument of conviction. The opposite party purposely avoided even the most natural eloquence, for fear of being at all like their antagonists. While one side used all the gesticulations of a player, the other affected all the apathy of a statue. The consequence was obvious. During the Usurpation, the methodistical cant bore undisputed triumph. On the Restoration it was universally cried down, and that sort of pulpit eloquence came into fashion, which professes not so much to persuade men to the doing of right, as the instructing of them in what is fit to be done; which, entirely neglecting the heart, goes solely to the head; and, instead of warming the feelings in the cause of conviction and virtue, leads us into the fields of speculation and

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controversy. Of this cast have been, in general, the sermons of Tillotson, Watts, Sherlock, and Hoadley. Their argumentative and tedious recapitulations found admirers and followers, as well as the strong reasoning of Barrow. And Barrow's strength gave way to the tinsel of Sterne. The most obvious truths of divine revelation, the simplest dictates of natural religion, have rested for their observance not on the doctrine, but on the preacher. Tillotson and Usher were approved and applauded: but Dodd and Hill have met with applause and approbation; and the same principle of novelty that changes a ruff for a beaufong has rendered a preacher of the gospel as fashionable as a courtesan.

SINCE the Reformation was established, the weapons which the Reformers had used against Popery, were handled with equal dexterity by Deists, Atheists, Unitarians, Socinians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and all the various sects of the Protestants, until the garb of religion has been so pulled
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and stretched, so darned and fine-drawn, cut up and ripped up, and patched together in such a variety of forms, that it is hard to say what Fashion she preserves. Statutes, it is true, have been dragged into the service of religious uniformity; but the Trinity has not been the less impugned, nor the divinity of Christ himself more safe from the insinuations of the Sceptic and the attacks of the Deist.

BUT we anticipate, and must return.

THE restoration of Charles the Second was followed by a marked and general relaxation of the Presbyterian austerity, and dissoluteness became the Fashion. Careless of all religions, while policy forced that monarch to profess one mode of faith and worship, his disposition kept him from being the partizan of any. But the national animosity against Popery was at too high a pitch to be restrained by Charles. The name of Papist was sufficient to stifle the voice of reason, and argument, and common sense, and com-
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mon humanity. His reign was a reign of religious plots, in the punishment of which that unoffending sect were constantly involved, without participating in the guilt. So high did the general appetite for plotting run, that even Dangerfield, a fellow who had been burned in the hand for crimes, transported, whipped, pilloried, four times fined for cheats, outlawed for felony, convicted of coining, and exposed to every species of public infamy, found means, by striking in with the prevailing humour, to load the Papists with the Meal-Tub Plot.—Titus Oates took advantage of the general temper, and deluded the world with another fabrication, which deservedly brought disgrace on the credulity of the nation.

WITH James returned all the rage of authoritative persecution;—but it was the persecution of a bigot, and would ill deserve a place among the fashionable enormities, but as it leads to the temper of the times. When that weak prince deserted

serted his throne, the spirit that directed him fled to his people, and the same system was followed, with this only variation, that it was directed by different agents against different objects. From his day to our own, a systematic and cold-blood persecution against Papists has disgraced our statute-books. The boast of modern refinement was contradicted by the bloody and unequivocal testimony of the massacre of Glenco, when the flame of religious phrenzy raged with all the violence of superstition in the frozen regions of the North. Indeed that soil has been at all times peculiarly favourable to the propagation of religious madness.

EVEN in our day, when toleration at last revived, and a liberality of spirit began to pervade men's religious and civil conduct all over the world, a Scottish missionary, 'trembling for the ark of Israel,' and turned apostle at twenty-three, occasioned an insurrection which threatened the very existence of the state. Prisons were emptied of their fettered inhabitants;

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the machine of government was impeded, and the capital of the British Empire was in flames, because an exemplary quiet of fifty years had obtained for the Roman-Catholicks the repeal of one, and that far from being the most rigorous, of those sanguinary and oppressive statutes that disgrace the code of laws of this country. The friends of candour and liberality had to reflect, that the excesses of the fifteenth century lost much of the apology which the ignorance and superstition of that age could plead in their excuse. The friends of humanity had to see with horror, that the bigotted Protestant of the most enlightened day could wield the weapon of persecution with as wide and as heavy an arm as the bigotted Papist of the darkest.

BUT the benevolent reader will not withhold his exultation, when he considers the extended liberality which is at present arising superior to the little influence of prejudice. In Germany, the Papist and Protestant clergymen officiate in the same church. In France, the order of military merit

merit is established in favour of Protestants, within the palace of a Roman-Catholic king. In Ireland, the Protestant and Papist have stood in the same rank under the arms which they carried for the liberties of their country, and the Presbyterian has built a chapel for his Popish neighbour. In this country, though the grant of a right which should be common to all mankind has caused a momentary convulsion, we have reason to hope that the wisdom of the legislature will think it high time to shake off the manacles under which the Roman-Catholics have so long groaned. In a commercial country like this, encouragement ought to be held out to the wealthy and industrious of every nation and religion. It should be no longer left in the power of every malignant individual to drag down the weight of punishment upon the unoffending subject, because he adheres to a belief which possessed the nations of Europe for fifteen hundred years. Nor let it be said that there is no danger of this, because it sel-

dom happens. The wisdom of law is to provide against what men may do, not to consider what they will do. The blood runs chill, when we are told that in the very last term but one an information was preferred in the King's Bench against a Popish Priest for administering the Sacrament of his church to a willing convert. We hold out the delusive encouragement of a power to purchase estates in fee to Papists, and at the same time suspend over their heads the axe, to prevent the exercise of speculative opinions. The supremacy of the Pope is renounced by the ecclesiastics of his church. The fear of a Pretender is not bugbear sufficient to frighten the infants of the rising generation. Why then a moment longer continue restrictions, of which the reason is obsolete, and the effects are pernicious? But the moment is passing. The doors to Honor and Power will be opened to all sects alike. The Humes and Gibbons and Priestleys are paving the way to Deism. The doctrines of the Christian religion are combated and rejected, and we must
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in the natural course of things expect to see the modes of its worship become an object of indifference. No man who reads the works, and considers the practices, of the present day can safely deny, though he must confess with regret and horror that the Deist is more in fashion than the Divine. The boasted toleration which is beginning to shew itself towards the followers of every religion, arises in a great measure from a contempt for all. But Fashions in every thing have generally taken their rise from a deformity.

WHILE all this is very true, we cannot help regretting the indiscriminating condemnation which is pronounced upon half the world. A man, whose taste and judgement in writing have immortalized his memory, was branded with the name of Deist, because he hoped that the illiterate Indian, who, not knowing the law, did as the law commanded, was in as fair a way to salvation as the learned English divine, who led a chequered life of sin and repentance. The profession of a be-
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lief which was most insulted by its adherents, was thought to be an exclusive passport to heaven ; and the man who violated every law which the Divine Founder of our religion prescribed to our actions, imagined that he should find a certain refuge in the acknowledgement of his belief ; a belief which was supported by the double sanction of reason and authority, and which could not be resisted without offering an equal insult to God and to common sense.

BUT the disciples of Christ shewed as little mercy to each other as to the Bramins of Confucius, or to the followers of Mahomet. The doctrine of irresistible grace gained sufficient ground to be made an article of belief ; and the Great Author of Nature was disgraced by an imputed partiality to his children ; a partiality which doomed, from all eternity, certain individuals to everlasting happiness, and others to as durable a punishment. Thus ignorance and fanaticism opened the way to the doctrine of inevitable necessity. Every action, says the Predestinarian, must have

have been exactly as it was. It was utterly impossible that Nero should not murder his mother—that Richard should not massacre his friends and his family.—It was not the will of the man, but the decree of Heaven that directed the blow; and the pious Samaritan had no more merit from his virtue, than the most rapacious assassin that ever lived on blood and murder.*

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* While the above was transcribing for the press, we casually met with a sermon, preached on the General Fast, 4th February, 1780, of which we will offer a passage to the reader. ‘Our predecessors, says the divine, believed every thing, and we believe nothing—Infidelity is the fashion. Princes write panegyrics upon drivellers and doctards. The last dying words and firm conduct of Atheists and Unbelievers are published to the Christian world, for their use and edification. And, instead of any solid and comfortable scheme of rational theory and morality, occult and independent properties in nature are multiplied and contended for.—The native, conscious, palpable, active and aspiring powers of the soul are disputed or denied—whilst the gloomy and degrading doctrines, of fatal and ineluctable necessity of a limited, imperfect, or superannuated Deity, of monstrous combinations, of inert or more monstrous organizations of intelligent matter, are hardily and cruelly obtruded on the astonished and trembling
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WHEN the divine truths of Revelation suffered the shocks of change, and yielded to the impulse of a prevailing Fashion, it was little wonder that the Law should, in its turn, take the round of change, and appear at different times in all the unsuited forms to which tyranny could stretch, or ingenious sophistry could mould it. Its principles, founded in the nature of man, and coeval with society, were perverted, and its course was obstructed, or changed, by all the little management of system, and corrupted by the mixture of chicanery. Tyrants and slaves, alike baneful to the welfare of their subjects, shewed how much the most permanent and uniform rule of action might be made to depend for its enforcement, as well as its justice, on the fortune of a day; and that day gave a Fashion which lasted, perhaps, when its memory was forgotten.

'believer; so that we stand unrivalled in our achievements. We have exploded the scheme of Christianity as an obsolete imposition; we have substituted matter in the room of God and Spirit, and reduced ourselves to the envied and glorious level of the brutes that perish.'

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To illustrate this, we need consider but a very few instances. To the disgrace of the eighteenth century, it still continues to be law, that a woman shall be burnt alive for killing her husband, while the husband shall only be hanged alive for murdering his wife; because, seven hundred years since, the feudal law considered the woman as under the sovereignty of her husband, and deemed an insurrection against her lord a species of rebellion, which was dignified by the name and the punishment of petit treason.

IN the reign of Henry the first, a law was made, which subjected every person who stole to the value of 12d. to capital punishment; and this inhuman penalty remains to this day in theory and practice, to shame our jurisprudence. The rate of the life of man—the most invaluable of all things under heaven, and for the loss of which, if taken by a private hand, no human retribution less than the life of the murderer can compensate—fluctuates with the course of exchange, and has
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been more or less appreciated, as money became more scarce or plenty. At this day, that coin is forty times less valuable than it was when the law we speak of was enacted, the price of the life of man is diminished in proportion, and has become forty times as cheap, because every necessary that supports him is forty times as dear.

WHEN we see the venerable wig which half a century since adorned the head of thirty and threescore alike, we laugh at the absurdity; the formal parterre which mocked our improvements is justly exploded; because those things violated the laws of Nature: but in the case which we are considering, common sense seems wholly to have left the world, and common humanity to have forgotten its office. In the highest concerns that can possibly engage the attention of a human being, we evince the most careless and criminal apathy and indifference. The sanguinary tenor of the criminal laws, which, like those of Draco, are written
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in the blood of our fellow-subjects, is unheeded by the sapience of our rulers, while they are industriously employed in restraining the privilege of eating a hare, or a partridge, to 'the little Nimrod of every manor.'

"HE that smiteth a man so that he die, shall surely be put to death!" so said the God of Heaven. The wisdom of our ancestors, not daring to exceed, hesitated to equal the punishment of the Almighty, and permitted the unfortunate slayer to make a pecuniary recompence to the family of the deceased; cautiously leaving to the arm of Divine Justice the infliction of eternal punishment, and humanely allowing the delinquent a moment for repentance. But we—and who are we? we must execute the divine mandate to the uttermost grain, and, not satisfied with wresting from Omnipotence the revenge of his wrongs, in the temporal punishment of blasphemy, rashly violate all his laws, in the mode which we adopt of avenging our own.

WE assume a power, in this case, which belongs not to limited beings. When the life of a man is lost in a quarrel, or is taken by an assassin, our Courts most learnedly and ingeniously labour to define what is man-slaughter, and what murder. The man who kills another on a sudden impulse of passion, is acquitted:—the weakness of human reason, which, in the moment of rage, yields to passion and revenge, effectually pleads his excuse. But it redounds to the opulence, though not to the humanity of our legislators and our judges, that no provision of mercy is found in the loads of precedents, and statutes, and reports, for the calls of nature. The father who steals the price of a leg of mutton to give a supper to his starving wife and children, is denied that allowance for the finest feelings, which the villain who stabs his friend and his protector may claim for the worst.

Is it necessary that we should point out more instances, in which the vestige of a Fashion remains upon our laws, repugnant

nant to nature and reason? Take then the penal laws against the Papists; take the law of descents, which excludes one brother of two, by the same father but by different mothers, from the inheritance of his father passing through his elder brother. Take the laws against Egyptians, or Gypsies, which make it felony, without benefit of clergy, to be seen for one month together in the company of those wanderers. Take the law which subjects a man to be hanged for forging a note for 20s. by which another worth 20,000 pounds is defrauded of that trifle, and compare it with that which imposes only burning in the hand on the polygamist, who with the craft of unprincipled villainy leaves his wife and children, to reduce a virtuous woman to want and wretchedness, under the pretence of marriage. One for stealing what is not missed is doomed to the halter; the other for ruining what can never be restored, and stealing the whole fortune of his victim, besides, escapes almost with impunity.

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It was after I had written the above, that the following circumstance happened to illustrate my speculation. At a late session at the Old Bailey, John Hogan, a Mulatto, was tried for murder. He had taken advantage of the family's absence to visit the house of a gentleman, whose maid-servant he had for some time followed. Determined to force a compliance which he could not obtain by persuasion, his brutal desire was turned by resistance into the most excessive revenge; and the object whom he had in vain sought to enjoy, fell a sacrifice to his outrageous passion. The mangled victim presented so many marks of his savage cruelty, that even the hackneyed ministers of justice, whose common occupation is the work of death, could not withhold the tribute of a tear. After a recital at large of facts which nature shudders to contemplate, and the unwilling pen hesitates to relate, the chronicle of justice goes on to tell us,—that the perpetrator of this crime was condemned to be hanged by the neck until he should be dead, and that then his body should

should be given to the surgeons for dissection. Having himself shewn no mercy to the object of his vengeance, nor given a moment for repentance, he is sent almost to immediate execution. While the honest mind is indulging a melancholy gratification at this act of justice, its indignation is awakened by the very next paragraph. For we are told in the following breath, that Edward Fox for stealing in a dwelling-house two silver salts, and John Callahan for robbing a person on the highway of a hat and a handkerchief, are doomed to an equal punishment. An equal did I say? No, far superior. The mind of the greatest villain has to contemplate the halter and the axe but for a moment. His sentence is pronounced; and it is executed before he has sufficient time to feel much misery at the approaching catastrophe: but the puny criminal is, by the cruel lenity of our judicature, indulged with torture, under the shew of mercy. When Damien suffered, the ingenuity of a nation, which arrogance and prejudice, fear and bigotry, have taught

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us to calumniate, to hate, and to despise, was stretched beyond its usual efforts to find a method of protracting his death, and prolonging his torments.—Shall a British tribunal be disgraced by the comparison? Or is feeling so far lost, that the pangs and agitations of a sensible mind, contemplating its inevitable dissolution, are below the level of common sufferings?

BUT these, it will be said, are spots which by their partial influence shew the general beauty of our laws to greater advantage. Let us, then, see how the very principles of law and equity have, in common with every thing human, paid their tribute to the rule of Fashion. Not to tire the reader with a tedious detail of the little technical changes which the revolutions of many ages have occasioned, it will be sufficient for our purpose to delineate the great and decisive alterations which have deformed, or improved, the system of our legal polity. The quarrels of an Ellesmere and a Coke; the introduction of estates tail, and the subsequent inven-
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tion of a mode whereby they might be barred, with an hundred other learned investigations which might be curious to a lawyer or an antiquary, would be equally unnecessary and unentertaining to those for whom this book is designed. But it may be an instructive as well as amusing work, to trace the modes by which the very names of Liberty and Law have been qualified or corrupted.

WHEN the abuses of power under King John forced the Barons of England to rise in arms for their freedom, and their intrepidity obtained Magna Charta, liberty was in general held to consist in the regulations imposed with regard to amerciaments, and reliefs, and wardships, and marriages, &c. &c. and the twenty-ninth chapter, in the observance of which our liberty has since been held to consist, then constituted a very small portion of the general concern. During the imbecility of his son's reign, the light of freedom dawned upon the nation. The rebellion of Leicester gave it heat and splendour: the

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people of England awoke, and discovered that the essence of liberty consisted in the right of representation. Parliaments were summoned for the first time in the shape in which we now see them, and the maxim, *quod ad omnes pertinet ab omnibus tractari*, which was founded in nature, and sanctified by the ablest monarch that ever swayed the English sceptre, prevailed until the reign of Henry the eighth. Men's minds then took another turn, and the liberty of a people was thought to be safely deposited in the breast of a sanguinary and capricious tyrant. The parliament of Britain dared to surrender the rights which it was delegated to preserve, and gave the sanction of a law to Henry's proclamations. During the long period from the accession of this monarch to that of James, the hand of power fixed the name of law upon the arbitrary mandates of the sovereign. The warrant which ordered Empson and Dudley to the executioner, and that which laid the axe on the neck of Raleigh, were equally unjustifiable, on the ground of sound law, though

though the first might claim the sanction of policy.

IN the reign of James the first, Lord Coke, that oracle of law, and Lord Bacon, another of its luminaries, extolled the Fashion of their hour, and praised to the world, as a master-stroke of political wisdom, a tribunal which might have disgraced the other side of the Stygian ferry. The Star-chamber found its advocates, and stalked hand in hand with *jure divino* prerogative, two grim spectres, to fright a nation out of its freedom.—But as all things human will change, so national spirit burst forth from oppression, and Filmer's fashionable absurdity yielded to the more powerful voices of Locke and Nature. Liberty came into vogue, and spread a flowing and warm vest on every congenial spirit that durst trace the fountain of law to its proper source, the consent of a free people.

CHARLES, encouraged by the authority of his father, and of Elizabeth, and of Mary,

Mary, and of Edward, and of Henry—taking, in short, the example of every prince who had preceded him, indulged the exercise of those prerogatives of which the people had been tired, and by an unaccommodating temper in the pursuit of his measures, fanned the reviving spark into a flame, which his blood was to quench. Tonnage and poundage were examined; the Star-chamber and High Commission Court were abolished; and the public rage continued to lop off every excrescence of power, until that fatal catastrophe, when the head of dejected monarchy was offered as an expiatory sacrifice to the insulted nation. The systematic fury of the republican spirit, glutted with the blood and disgusted with the name of Royalty, exhibited to Europe the absurd appearance of an oligarchy, and every feature of our government was altered.

CHARLES the second's accession was marked by the introduction of new Fashions in every thing; and the department
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of the law was not uninfluenced. Parliaments, those good old safeguards of the constitution, grew into disrepute, and arbitrary power, terrified by a recent example from acting by force, wrought by fraud to alter the Fashion of our government and our constitution. The freedom of the press was restrained by a public licencer, and the voice of Liberty, though it could not be stifled, was obliged to whisper her injuries. Constructive treasons were indulged with a sanguinary wantonness. Like that 'wild and new-fangled heap of treasons' which sprung up under Henry the eighth, the judges carried construction such a length; that wise men were puzzled to understand, and prudent men perplexed to escape, the intricacy. Law was distorted, and evidence tortured, to justify the offerings which were made of a Ruffel and a Sydney at the altar of power.

PRINCIPLES like Fashions are usually in extremes. In the troubles which agitated the kingdom under Charles the first, the
spirit

spirit of freedom had over-stept the bounds of nature, and brought additional deformity on a body which it professed to improve. But in the reign of James the second, the awkward decorations of a republic being shuffed off, the prince stood arrayed in the more powerful armour of monarchy; and the sovereign of a free people blushed not in the open exercise of powers, and the profession of a religion, which were contrary to his oath, as well as to his interests.

THE law of libels, one of the strange monsters brought to public view at this period, shook its talons over the rising spirit of resistance; and the perversion of law aided the encroachments of power in striking at trial by jury, but in vain. The voice of nature for once led the Fashion, and called forward the spirit of Liberty, for the reverence and support of a nation, which has seldom permitted tyranny to go long unpunished. James deserted a throne which he was unable and unfit to fill, and the people convinced an admiring

miring world, that such a thing existed as an original compact between the governors and the governed, and that the latter would effectually resist its infraction.

From this time forward, in law and politics, every day had its system, which was pursued with all the zeal, and opposed with all the rancour of puerile competition. Whig and Tory were the comprehensive distinctions, from which our statesmen, our divines, and our lawyers were elevated to the honours of their professions, as either system in turn ruled the helm. The hated name of Jacobite, which was affixed to the latter, and the hateful recollection of the family whence it was derived, frequently gave stability and continuance to the power of the Whig interest. From the accession of William until that of our present pious sovereign, that party was in general the prevailing one. It is true, the accommodating duplicity of William admitted the Tories to a participation of power, and a Somers and a Sunderland by turns took
the

the lead in his affairs. The amiable affection of Anne toward a brother, for whose restoration she was not, perhaps, indifferent, suffered an Harley, an Ormond, and a Bolingbroke, to guide those councils which were to be ruled by a Walpole and a Marlborough. In the vicissitudes that took place, the animosities of the opposite parties breathed very little christian meekness; and attainders and impeachments were pursued and carried with unrelenting severity.

WHEN ~~George III~~ ascended the throne, he found it supported by the immortal Pitt. Tied to no system but by the interests of his country, the Fashion of his mind was to exalt the power of England above the nations of Europe. But Majesty felt its inferiority, and, shrinking from the unequal contest with its subject, debased its superior into the dignity of a peerage. The reins of government were resigned to Lord B^{ute}, and by him transferred to any tool that would drive the machine by his direction. Since that, the

the political course has been pretty steady. A stern system of oppression, laid down without contrivance, and pursued without a plan, was baffled in its purpose, and exhibited to Europe the disgraceful spectacle of England's dereliction of American dependence, after the accumulation of one hundred and thirty millions of money spent for her subjugation. The great misfortunes to which men and nations are subject, seldom follow from a single error, and as seldom does it happen that the foibles which we commit are requited at a blow. The independence of America begot the freedom of Ireland. "A voice!" said the ablest orator of his day arising in the Irish senate; "a voice from America shouted to liberty!" "The echo of it caught your people as it passed along the Atlantic, and they renewed the sound till it reverberated here!"

WHILE one Scotchman dictated the measures of government, another presided over our jurisprudence. The universal admiration which a life of eighty years

had obtained for one of the brightest geniuses that were ever lost to the literary world, and shackled in the forms of a profession, will inform posterity of a M——d. The intuitive rapidity with which this man's great conceptions comprehended and unfolded all the intricacy of the longest causes, will certainly never be exceeded, perhaps never equalled. The hoary sage can look back on an active life of above half a century, in which, as an advocate and a judge, he has stood without a rival. He can call over the actions of his private life, and review with complacency his discharge of all the duties of a husband, a master, and a friend. He can recollect, that in the administration of the laws he has, with unceasing assiduity, dispensed justice between individuals. But the voice of Truth arrests the hand of Panegyric here, and the respect which we justly owe this otherwise great character, draws a veil over the infirmity which advised the American war, and introduced the exploded doctrines of libel; doctrines which disgraced the reign of a Stuart, and which one would
 imagine

imagine to have been brought forward, to convince mankind how far the amiable virtues of a ~~G-*entleman*~~ could reconcile his subjects to his person and government. It is a reflection which cannot be indulged without sorrow, that the same column which, shall on one side exhibit the great, intrepid, and upright judgment against Wilkes, will on the other record the unjust and time-serving principles that appeared in that against Woodfall.

THE region of Letters has fared little better than that of Drapery; and the modes by which the reason was to be convinced, or the passions were to be raised, have been as various and opposite as the habits of a masquerade. This only was the leading difference: In one, every individual had to please himself: in the other, he must give up his private judgment to the general taste; “and the man
“that dared to deviate from the custom
“of his country in the mode of expressing his thoughts, became as ridiculous
“as one of us should now by walking the
G 2 “ streets

"streets in a Spanish cloak or a Roman
"toga."

AFTER the revival of letters in Europe, the rage of writing caught the highest ranks with wonderous force. Henry, Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, James, and Charles, claimed, on one account or other, the dignified title of Author. The monarchs who would rule by their will, were ambitious to captivate by their speculations, or to convince by their arguments. Kingly power was delineated by Charles, Religion defended by Henry, and Philosophy translated by Elizabeth. Boethius's Consolation had the honour of being dressed in an English garb by the greatest Princess of Europe. Queen Catherine Parr caught the *cacoethes scribendi* from her husband; Lady Jane Gray inherited it from nature. The contagion spread itself through all the domestics and frequenters of the Court; and the employments, which in modern times have been held by the professor of dress and mistresses of the robes, were then filled by the mistresses

treffes of language. Lady Burleigh and Lady Bacon, with their two sisters, took more pride in their erudition than in their rank, their beauty, or their splendor.

BUT the revival of learning was not the restoration of Taste. The false tinsel which the generality of the Roman classics, during the decline of that empire, spread on their works, caught the eye, and was imitated as a perfection :

A second deluge Learning thus o'erran,
And the monks finish'd what the Goths began.

The restoration of learning was marked all over Europe by this glitter of false ornament, which it took great observation and reflection as well as a long space of time to remove. The frivolous witticisms of Petrarck and Guarini; the affected ornaments of Voiture and Balzac; the affectations and conceits and fopperies of chivalry, which decorated Spenser's allegories, were looked up to as the summit of elegance. Learning, on its revival
in

in this Island, was attired in the same unnatural garb which it wore at the time of its decay among the Greeks and Romans.

CHARLES the first admired the arts, and valued men of science. The encouragement of Vandyke shewed his love of painting: the promotion of Inigo Jones testified his taste in architecture. Under Cromwell, the same wretched fanaticism that subverted the laws, corrupted the taste of the nation. Gaiety and wit were totally proscribed. Human learning was held in contempt; freedom of enquiry in detestation. The gloomy sectary, who derived inward light from the divine illumination, scorned to depend on the common means for the acquisition of a species of knowledge, which his ignorance disabled him from valuing, and his fanaticism taught him to despise. The artful dissembler borrowed the mask of sincerity to gain a character; and nothing was to be met on one side but assumed cant and hypocrisy; on the other, nothing but the delirium of religious frenzy.

So

So deeply did the policy or the conviction of men involve them in the love of enthusiastic jargon, that the warmest partizan and advocate of the Regicides could not obtain even the public attention for the highest effort of human genius. While the immortal poem of *Paradise Lost* was consigned to neglect, Whitlocke, whose name is now forgotten in the world, talked with indifference, if not contempt, of one Milton, a blind man, that was employed in translating a treaty with Sweden into Latin.

Sic tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.

How seriously ought we to remember that proverb—"Boast not thyself of to-morrow, "for thou knowest not what a day may "bring forth?" How little should we then depend upon the vain delusive hope of immortality, because we pleased the hour in which we lived! Believe me,—ye who take such pains to display your art in all the accuracy of periods, and the counterpoise of diction; who labour with more than mechanical

48 THE PROGRESS OF FASHION.

mechanical patience to produce the antithesis, or crowd the swollen sentence with sonorous epithets; that a day will arrive, when the point of Sterne and the precision of Isocrates will be equally forgotten.

AFTER the Restoration, the successful party looked through the whole Conduct, Systems, Fashions, and Habits of their late triumphant adversaries with the prepossession which the memory of past wrongs might inspire. The tinge which it threw over all the actions of a fanatical Sect, would be amply sufficient to condemn them. Here there was a better cause. As human reason never influenced their thoughts or conduct, so the palate was not endeavoured to be gratified, the reason to be convinced, nor the heart to be won. The means which they used, were adequate to the end which they pursued—equally incoherent, frantic, and absurd: so that when cool Judgement resumed her seat, and Criticism was applied to Literature, Taste found a meal
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at which her stomach revolted. New dishes were offered by new cooks to the disgusted palate. But as men after excessive cold are apt to use extreme heat to revive them; here the public ran into a like excess, and the reign of overstrained piety was succeeded by the accession of irreligion and immorality. The women became less chaste and more frivolous; the men more witty and less delicate. Dryden's Plays and Rochester's Poems bear testimony to the vitiated taste, which swallowed ribaldry for wit, and obscenity for satire. From this period until the reign of Queen Anne, there was little decided excellence to be found in the walks of literature. But a constellation of geniuses then appeared, which has continued to the present day to shine with almost its original splendor. Pope, after forty years, still was followed as a pattern; and the Essay on Man found an imitator and a rival in Hayley. Addison meets the same admiration and applause in 1786 that he did in 1716. But the various and fluctuating temper of popular taste called for something origi-

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nal; the critics wanted food, and the virtuous a feast. Chatterton and Macpherson gratified them both. Ossian's Poems were thrown out like a tub in a storm to amuse the world, and, like that, drew a crowd after it, which tossed it to and fro with all imaginable rage, until, their fury spent, they suffered it quietly to swim down the current. The breath of popular applause wafted it along, until it brought its author a reasonable freight of solid pudding, more profitable, at least, than the empty fame which his modesty declined.

Thus has it fared in every branch of polite literature. If Shakespeare has held his station undisturbed for two hundred years, the public ear has with equal avidity heard Congreve and Cumberland. Though Homer has been for near three thousand years the Prince of poetry, yet the tide of popular applause has in its strongest current deviated to Young and Akenfide, to Gray and Goldsmith, to Thomson and Armstrong. The sublime, the tender, the descriptive, the satirical, the pompous, have by turns possessed the

variable

variable empire of public approbation. From the impulse of the moment, and the rage after novelty, Churchill's spleen has assumed that place which was filled by the amiable simplicity and benevolence of Goldsmith. The flowing elegance of Boilingbroke, the formal sententiality of Shaftesbury, the engaging morality of Johnson, the captivating but dangerous allurements of Gibbon, have been with equal ardour admired and imitated.

NOR has the influence of Fashion been confined to modes of writing. The very common effort of nature by which we communicate our thoughts, has been modified to the taste of a prevailing circle. In open defiance of all Europe, have we heard dictators teaching us to violate every rule of nature and reason, by so closely assimilating the sounds of different vowels, that it is almost impossible to tell the difference by the ear; and instead of an improvement in our accentuation, we are likely to create a confusion almost as bad as that of Babel. Extending the arbitrary

trary distinction to languages whose sounds should be as immutable as their construction, we have, very gratefully indeed, Anglicised the Latin, as well as Latinized the English. Because the poverty of our tongue wanted to borrow from the Roman, we have in return imposed upon the benefactor a dress which it will not bear.

³ *Pro* ³ *gèniem* ² *sed* ² *enim* ³ *Trojāno à* ³ *sanguinè duci.* *

THIS is an exemplification of that—English cut on Greek and Latin—which Hudibras on another account so well ridicules.

IN the general revolutions of things, Metaphysics and their concomitant Physic have veered to the point of fashionable attraction. As a neighbouring nation assumes the muff on the first of November,

• The marks are used according to Mr. Sheridan's direction in his Dictionary. The sounds annexed will be illustrated by the following table.

¹ Bét	¹ ánt
² Thère	² ále
³ Fcét	

and

and days it laſide on Eaſter Sunday with equal regularity, whether that feaſt happens in February or May; with as little regard to nature and to reaſon has the ſcience of phyſic been made to depend upon the ſanction of a name, or the authority of a ſchool,

GALEN, in the ſecond century, broached a ſyſtem of phyſic which was implicitly received and followed for thirteen hundred years, when it fell by the hand of Paracelſus. Ariſtotle, five hundred years earlier, laid down a plan of metaphyſics, which, after an empire of twenty centuries, yielded to the more clear and reaſonable ſyſtem of Locke.

SINCE the revival of learning in the fifteenth century, the ſpeculation of the philoſopher and the theory of the phyſician have had a wider field in which to range. Printing has diffuſed opinions and hypotheſes, as well as their refutations; and the world has often been ſuſpended between the Faſhion eſtabliſhed in one day,

day, and the innovation of the next. Thus, from the beginning of the sixteenth until the middle of the seventeenth Century, the doubtful contest between the disciples of Galen and those of Paracelsus was supported, on one side, by the systematic physician; on the other, by the analytical chemist. So strong are men's prejudices in favour of the doctrines which have been impressed on their youth, or the discoveries which their ingenuity has made, that the weighty evidence of success was not alone able to overturn the Galenic system; and it was not finally exploded, until after Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. Galileo's introduction of mathematical reasoning, also, contributed in a good measure to this event. But the sagacity of Lord Bacon, united with Gassendi's ingenuity and the philosophy of Des Cartes, completed its downfall, and led a Fashion by which the practice of physic is still strongly tinged.

But about the beginning of the present Century,

Century, three new and different systems of physic entered the lists for the acquiescence of the world, under the auspices of Stahl, Hoffman, and Boerhaave.

STAHL led the way with a system teaching that there is in man a rational soul, acting in many instances independently on the body, and purely in consequence of its intelligence; and this principle of immaterialism obtained the countenance of Perrault, Nichols, Mead, Porterfield, Simson, and Gaubius. Stahl soon sunk into oblivion on the appearance of Hoffman, Boerhaave, and Haller. Unluckily for himself and his system, that physician leaned too much on the *vis conservatrix et medicatrix nature*, without ever considering, that by the vaunted Hippocratic method of curing diseases by nature, he superseded all the necessity of art, and left to Providence what human prudence more wisely assumed to its own peculiar care;—without ever reflecting that he struck at the very root of a profession, half at least of whose consequence depends on the
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the bulk of the wig as much as on the depth of the understanding, and its success as much on the names as on the nature of its medicines. The art of curing by expectation, decried in Stahl, gave way to the art of curing by faith, which has been adopted in general by the rest of his profession. All my readers must remember the famous quackery of Animal Magnetism, which made such a noise in Paris, and brought such heaps of wealth to its inventors.

HOFFMAN had scarcely taken place of Stahl, when he was to give way to Boerhaave. System succeeded system, as if the art of man could alter the course of nature. Van Swieten new-modelled Boerhaave. Reasoning upon hypothesis was encountered by multitudes of facts without any reasoning at all, and Lieutaud came forward with his synopsis, to puzzle and distract the student. To these has succeeded Cullen, who may hold the Fashion, perhaps, as long as any of his predecessors, and will some day or other as certainly decline. It

It is amazing to consider with what self-complacency the inventors of every novel system indulged their practice, and with how much avidity every new mode of cure was followed. Thus, according to the different prevailing systems, the Small-pox was at one time treated with as much motherly care as a hot-house plant. The unhappy patient, shut in from air, had not the advantage of a crevice to assist expiring nature. Every cavity was stopped up against the breath of heaven, while warm fires and heavy clothing conspired to bring him forth a terrible spectacle. The seamed face and torn eye bore living testimony to the malignity of a disorder, which (such was the ignorant language of the times) art could not possibly avert, and could mitigate but little. But the same principle of curious enquiry that has too often sacrificed its subject to some fanciful experiment or favourite opinion, stepped in to rescue the blushing cheek and brilliant eye of female beauty from the jaws of a devouring pestilence. While we consider with fond indulgence

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the happy discovery that surmounts at least one of the most fatal distempers to which mankind is subject, we cannot withhold from the name of Montague that tribute of gratitude to which her philanthropy is entitled; and while we exult in our refinements over the rest of the world, it may be an useful memento to human arrogance, that it is to a nation whose name has become proverbial for barbarity and ignorance, that we are indebted for Inoculation*.

FEVERS have been treated as differently as the Small-pox. Regardless of constitution or habit, one uniform system of cure prevailed; and bleeding in that disorder was carried to such excess that, together with the weak diet prescribed, the remedy was in the end often as bad as the disease. The massacres, the treachery, and oppression, which wasted and subdued South America, were too highly rewarded by the discovery of a medicine, which

* Lady M. W. Montague saw inoculation practised at Constantinople, when there with her husband. She communicated the method to Dr. Mead, who began the practice in England.

has

has totally subverted the old mode of treatment for this and many other disorders. The Peruvian Bark now takes place of the Lancet, and this improvement in practice is nearly as general as was the error which it corrects.

WHILE the body of man has been subject, in many other instances than those which we have mentioned, to more capricious and experimental treatment, his soul has been made equally to fluctuate. That spirit which is to "return to God who gave it," has been said to exist in the pineal gland, and in the corpus callosum, and generally in the head, and diffusively over the whole body. Aristotle, and Plato, and Epicurus, and Des Cartes, and Hobbes, possessed equal power in limiting the immaterial principle. Locke came at last to shake the systems of antiquity, and obtained the reverence of an hundred years, notwithstanding the cavils of a Bolingbroke and Hume, and the sneers of Voltaire. But we are grown wiser. Scepticism borrows the moral name of Priestley

to aid her attacks on religion. From the honest simplicity which thought that a soul existed somewhere to be punished or rewarded, we have arrived to the higher sagacity of rejecting a doctrine which is not illustrated by the anatomization of nerves and muscles.

WE intended shewing the reader some of the ancient schemes of Metaphysics; but a short specimen will, we believe, be sufficient: and for the stronger authority we shall take our information from a book very lately published, in which a noble Lord professes to give the world an History of Ancient Metaphysics. The result of three large volumes on this subject amount to the following propositions.

FIRST, That the animal called Ouran Outang is a man.

SECOND, That the natural state of man is to live without clothing, fire, habitation, or language; that he should go upon all four; and that every thing which
has

has been added, taken away or altered by human art with respect to the animal life of man, has been for the worse.

THIRD, That raw vegetables are the natural, and therefore the proper food of man.

FOURTH, That there are men with tails ; nay, that tails are natural to all men ; and that if we have them not, it is because we wear them away by fitting.

FIFTH, That there are whole nations of men with but one leg ; and that in Ethiopia there are men whose eyes are in their breasts.

SIXTH, That men in the earlier ages, at the time of the Trojan war, lived centuries, and grew to the height of ninety feet.

WITH many more of equal use and entertainment.

THE same inconstancy that biaſſed the
judg-

judgment perverted the taste of mankind. Outward form pleaded the excuse of novelty for its fluctuation; the eye craves variety, and it must be satisfied, or disgust will follow. But not content with moderate change, invention has been put to the rack to devise habits preposterous and unnatural. And for what? Some person of distinction, to hide a deformity or a misfortune, concealed by a cushion, or a ruff, or a hoop, the deficiency or the appearances of nature, and the awkward but necessary appendage was imitated as a beauty. Imitation begot envy, and what was copied one day was exceeded the next. Thus because one woman of figure had an unequal hip, all her sex were saddled with rumps almost as big as themselves. Another laboured under a temporary increase of size, and the hoop was called in to give maid and wife, child and mother, the same matron-like appearance. A third, to countenance what could not well be concealed, indulged an unnatural length of waist, or perhaps through singularity affected it; and the women were for a time all body. A

fourth,

fourth, encumbered with an extraordinary length of limbs, anxiously curtailed the little body she had, until, like Hudibras's Knight,

Her rump had almost got the upper
Hand of her head———

and the fair-sex were as generally all tail. By the same mistaken influence, we saw at one time all the fine foreheads in the kingdom spoiled, because a lady who then held the reins of Fashion chose to conceal the extreme height of her own. And if this were a proper place, we might adduce instances *in infinitum* of equally ill-founded and absurd customs.

BUT the evil did not rest here. Painters, who should have drawn from nature, and not from Fashion, were afraid to do their duty; and according to the various systems of dress, an Eve and a Venus have been represented in forms as different as the habits of 1716 and 1786. And how should it be otherwise? For what limner would have temerity enough to offer a piece to the

the public view which should militate directly against the practices of that very Public ?

THE men too who scorn the imputation of weakness, and talk by rote like parrots of female absurdities, have heedlessly subjected themselves to ample retaliation. For a woman who strives by dress alone to increase the charms of her person, there are many apologies. If she is a maid, she has a natural wish to gain a partner for life ; and while her dress carries no deception, the advantage she takes of it is quite allowable : nay, it is necessary ; since nothing is so disgusting in any woman as a disposition to dirt ; nothing so conducive to health as cleanliness ; and health is one source of beauty.

If she is a wife, it is not only still incumbent on herself, but it is a duty to her husband, to be as neat and elegant as her circumstances will allow. What man can bear with patience to hear his wife apologize for her dirty night-cap and broken bed-gown, because she and her husband were alone at breakfast ?

fast? It is her duty also in regard to her children, if she wishes them not to be flatterers. We all know the force of example beyond precept upon young minds. And let it not be objected that the phantasies of dress are very unbecoming a modest woman. I am no advocate for them, on any person. The decent elegance of habit fits equally well on both: nothing indecorous for one can become the other.

IF she is a widow—she must judge for herself; and neither fashion nor I can prescribe to her appearance.

IN the two former, it is clear that the desire either of conquest or possession makes a certain portion of dress not only excusable but necessary; and why it should be excluded from the last, unless toothless old age forbid it, I am sure I see no cause.

BUT amongst men who affect superior reason, the *necessity* for a *recourse* to external appearance is done away. I say, they

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affect

affect it: for in this instance, as in fifty others, the affectation is apparent. We are accustomed to say women love shew and dress, and to censure them for it as a folly: but why do they love it? Because we follow dress and shew more than merit, and they wisely throw out the most certain lure to attract us.—This by the way—whether the superiority be real or affected, it makes equally to my purpose in saying that the useless ornaments of dress do not become us. We have, however, exceeded even this absurdity. Regardless of the influence of season, which in this country is as violent as that of climate, we audaciously set ourselves above the reach of cold and heat. The Buck whom you meet saddled with a burden of cloaths in the Dog-days, will be ashamed to appear more than half covered during the snow. In charity, I omit the paint which, within every one's remembrance, was exhibited to shew the delicacy of our sun-burnt complexions in January: nor shall I dwell on the prudent recourse that our striplings had to Taliacotius's precept
for

for a mercenary whisker, to display some proof of their otherwise ambiguous gender.

If it were my purpose to entertain the reader with a great but unnecessary, if not impertinent display of learning, I might spin the History of Fashion to a length which would not suit either with his patience or my avocations : but enough has been said to shew, that there is scarcely a department of science which has not been abused and deformed by some one fashionable absurdity or other; and in this enough is done to justify my undertaking in defence of that part of our fellow-creatures, whom arrogance and weakness have taught us to treat with cruelty and contempt. Possessed of the superior strength which nature bestowed upon us, in subserviency to their wants and weaknesses, we vainly assume a pre-eminence of reason, because we feel an advantage in muscles. Dooming them from their infancy to trifles, we charge upon their nature what is owing to their

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education;

education; and while we withhold the means, are not ashamed to upbraid them because they cannot attain the end of knowledge. We rear them, not with an eye to the great duties of life, but to its frivolities, and load them with the odium which should retort on our mismanagement. 'To teach the young idea how to shoot,' is one of the most difficult, but ought to be, to a parent, the most pleasing of all occupations. To inculcate useful knowledge ought to be in itself, if any thing can be, its own reward, because it promises the most fruitful harvest; an harvest that shall flourish with abundance in good fortune, and bear the shocks of adversity with firmness and patience.

BUT what is our conduct? Let us trace the history of it. That period of our daughters' lives which in justice ought to be appropriated to the writing-master, is spent with the Frenchman and the fidler; and Miss must know how to dance, before she can well speak, much less read. If she does learn this necessary qualification, it is in general from some old woman, who,
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having received a similar, or an inferior education herself, knows just enough to make her mis-spell or mispronounce every word she utters. As the young Lady grows up, the time which reason points out for forming the mind, is devoted to forming the ear, and the book-case gives way to the harpsichord. Thus modelled, she is carried abroad with her Mamma—who has been formed exactly on the same plan—She dances, sings, flirts, cheats at cards, tosses her fan with an air, ogles every pretty fellow she meets, and passes for a prodigy of taste and politeness. After three or four years spent in this way, she finds herself at twenty driven to rouge for a complexion, and obliged to take shelter under the name of a husband for those indulgencies which a malignant and envious world will not yet allow her. She is married; but her heart has no concern in it: for it is the desperate effort to save herself from neglect, and to acquire the means of power and pleasure. Having never learnt the duties of a wife, her last thought is to practise them. One continued

nued round of dissipation and idleness occupies all her thoughts and attention. If she has unfortunately met with a fool, which, by the way, it is ten to one will be the case, he knows and practises the doctrine of retaliation.---A separation ensues, or perhaps a divorce is obtained, in consequence of an action of *crim. con.* and both parties throw themselves with unrestrained liberty into the arms of vice. The Town receives her, a willing victim to venal prostitution. The gaming-table receives his last shilling, and sends him for relief to the pistol, the pond, or the halter. But if, by some accident, such a woman as I have described meets a man of sense and virtue, how much more unfortunate are the consequences? What compensation can the parties to his delusion make him, for the infamy of her conduct, in whom he promised himself the consummation and the partner of his happiness? In either case, the situation of the unfortunate female is equally hard.--The errors of her life have been owing to her education--her education to her parents;--while she
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is, without mercy, made to suffer all the undiminished odium for violating those laws which she was never taught to observe; and while the cruelty of the world transmits to her unfortunate and innocent children the punishment of a fault which might have been venial in herself.

SURELY if ever a subject deserved the serious attention of mankind, it is this. If we were to have recourse to facts, we might swell a volume with all the examples of history to shew how strongly national manners influence, if not overrule, even national laws themselves. But we study the inverse of the proposition. We enact laws against adulterers, and our Legislators go from the Senate into the lap of adultery. We complain that our wives are unfaithful, and every step which we lead our daughters is to the road of infidelity. We exclaim against the masculine appearance which, in the fair-sex, has for some time past superseded the habits of female softness; while our men (if such they may be called) are emulous

lous to display the strongest signs of effeminacy. This is the experience of every day, and almost of every house. Can we then still doubt whether it is necessary to let reason and nature take those reins, which have so long been guided by absurdity and folly? Would you make your daughter amiable in her dispositions? Then store her mind with those ideas which shall exalt her above the little attentions of dress and dancing. Instil into her those principles of honour and virtue which shall make her despise a mean action, and detest a bad one. Shew her, and history will furnish multitudes of instances, the certain consequences of vice and of virtue. But puzzle her not with morality in the abstract, while you set before her the examples of its practice and its rewards. Would you render her capable of the highest embellishments which she can receive? Teach her to consider every attainment of her life as subservient to virtue, and in that to her own happiness. Believe me, no proper amusement, no proper study will be proscribed; and few
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even of those which, carried to excess, end in vice or folly. Painting, music, dancing, are all within the catalogue of those amusements which Nature often craves for her refecton. But none, not even the most innocent of them, ought to be followed as an employment.—I feel already that the names of Kauffman and Linley rise in judgment against my assertion. But I must not retract it. We can never argue from particulars to generals: and if we could, those are examples to be admired rather than imitated. The great end of a human being relatively to his fellow-creatures is social happiness. In the union between man and wife, this is almost the sole object. And how shall we expect to attain this end, with a woman given entirely to any one pursuit of science or pleasure? If of science, there is surely little prospect of finding, combined with it, a steady attention to the duties of a wife, a mother, or a friend. The reason is obvious. With frames and constitutions weaker than we have, their passions are warmer, and the rays of their

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genius concentrate to the object on which they engage themselves more strongly than ours. It absorbs all other considerations. If of pleasure, the danger is greater, because its influence extends beyond the department of œconomy : it is not the arrangement of the furniture, nor the disposition of the table, nor the regulation of the family alone, which suffers, but the fame, the fortune, and the happiness.— But mark—this is the pleasure which becomes an occupation. It is that alone, which never fails in the end to degenerate into evil.

EVERY woman is not born to be a Montague, nor every man to be a Locke. But that must be indeed a very mechanical arrangement of feeling, that can bear without indignation to see folios written on the Whole Duty of Woman, and containing a system—Of what?—Of education? No, but a system of cookery and clear-starching : as if God, when in pity to man's weakness he gave an help-mate to his necessities, doomed the unoffending partner to the drudgery of a menial.

BEFORE we arraign the levity of the female sex, two things seem necessary. First, to examine our own, and ask wherein consists that steadiness, the possession of which, alone, can entitle us to become the accusers: and secondly, to give their intellects a fair and candid trial, before we determine that nature has stamped them with a constitutional inferiority. If this were the place to prove that genius is not confined to sex, we might adduce names enough from all ages to support us in that assertion. And if the circumstances of a present hour were to be illiberally drawn down to shew a superiority on either hand, the names of Cowley, and Seward, and Montague, and More, and Macaulay, and Yearsley, might justify the claim of female preeminence. But we decline the invidious office. These observations have not been written with a view to the unnatural exaltation of one sex at the expence of the other. Their object has been to awaken our attention to female merit; to shew that the softness of a skin and the tinge of a complexion do not exclude the

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the fairest part of the creation from all claim to common sense; to prove that the Lords of the World are not more exempt, even in the highest concerns of life, from the little jealousies that have been attributed exclusively to the women; and to induce the people of this country to adopt a rational system of instruction for its females; a system which shall have virtue not shew for its object, and use as its means the influence of reason.

F I N I S.